

Eastport Fiber Connectivity Initiative



Eastport Fiber Connectivity Committee

Voting members:

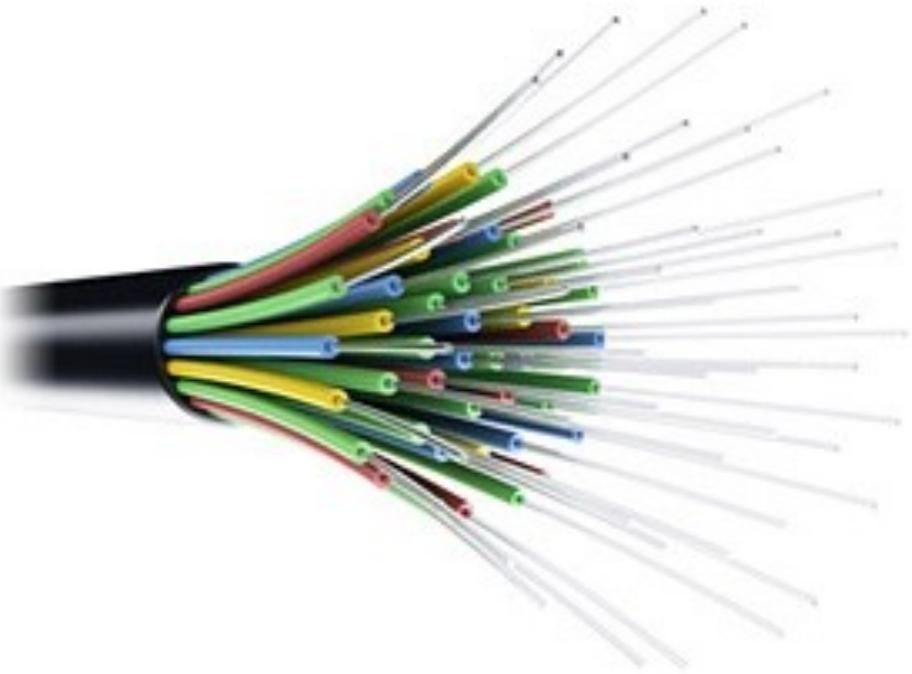
- Ken Burke - Vice Chair/Secretary
- John Francis - *Pending council approval*
- Melissa Mitchell - *Pending council approval*
- Manuel Moreno - *Pending council approval*
- Jeanne Peacock - Council Liaison
- Paul Sheehy
- Danny Wagoner
- Mark Wigley - Chair

Non-voting participants:

- Elaine Abbot - Community and Economic Development Planner, Sunrise County Economic Council
- Kate Devonshire - Eastport City Manager
- Amy McDonald - Charlotte
- Debi Price - Charlotte
- Christine Sabatus - Sipayik
- Chris Waite - Sipayik Consultant, Four Directions Maine
- Lora Whelan - Quoddy Tides

Why fiber, why now?

A short story...



Why fiber, why now?

When compared to cable, fiber generally:

- Offers **greater bandwidth** than copper cables of the same diameter
- Has **faster speeds** – about 70% of the speed of light with less degradation than cable
- Can **carry signals farther** than copper cable
- Is **more reliable** – immune to temperature, weather, and moisture
- Doesn't carry a current so **not effected by electromagnetic interference** (EMI)
- Is **thinner and sturdier** – withstands more pull pressure than copper, less prone to damage & breakage
- Offers **flexibility for the future**
- Has a **lower total cost** of ownership (TCO)

Eastport Fiber Connectivity Initiative

Mission

To implement **community-driven, affordable, end-to-end fiber** optic-based Internet connectivity providing **fast, reliable, symmetrical upload and download speeds** and content subscription packages to all Eastport residents and businesses.

- **Symmetrical:** Same upload (Maine to the world) and download (world to Maine) speeds
- **Tiered:** Multiple offerings combining specific upload/download speeds and cost allowing users to select the best cost/performance option for their needs

Supporting objectives

- **Engage, educate, and involve** residents and businesses from the start
- Implement an **end-to-end fiber optic network** to “future-proof” the system for next 20-30 years
 - Optical Network Terminals determine system throughput, can be upgraded without touching the fiber
- **Tiered services** where **cost** and **symmetrical upload/download speeds** are packaged
 - Users to select the best possible cost/performance option to meet their needs
 - Add modular service/content packages (television, streaming services, etc.) if desired with no long-term contract
- **Symmetrical 1 Gig or better** performance available in top tier
- Obtain **grants to minimize Eastport costs** for planning, implementation, community outreach, etc.
- **No local tax impact** to residents

Supporting objectives

- Leverage **state and federal access programs** to reduce costs for qualifying residents
 - Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP)
- **Service Level Agreement (SLA)** with commercial partner to install fiber and act as our Internet Service Provider (ISP) providing **high availability and performance** regardless of weather, time of day, system maintenance etc.
 - Firm commitment to a completion timeline
- **Eastport-owned infrastructure:** Fiber lines, Optical Network Terminals, modems/routers etc.
- **Transparency and engagement** as the plan matures
- **Out-year revenue** to the City of Eastport once any loans/bonds have been paid off
- **Pass a council vote** approving the final plan and initiating partner contract and funding

Stakeholders

- Eastport **residents, schools, and businesses**
- Eastport **City Council & government**
- **Sunrise County Economic Council**
- **Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA)**
- **Island Institute**
- **Potential Industry partners** (installation, support, ISP)
- **Nearby communities** beginning their fiber journey



Community Partnerships

- **It makes sense to partner** to share knowledge, enhance planning, reduce costs, and expand regional benefits
- **Sipayik** and **Perry** are logical potential partners
 - Charlotte has asked to stay informed
- **With City Council approval**, we would like to reach out to them
- Other Downeast communities are **welcome** to join the conversation

What's underway?

- Interviewing industry partner candidates prior to issuing an RFP
 - Consolidated Communications (Fidium)
 - Downeast Broadband Utility (DBU)
 - Spectrum
 - Axiom
- Applying for planning grants
 - Island Institute
 - Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA)
 - Gatekeeper for federal funds
- Developing a Communications Plan
 - Supporting content and media
 - Stakeholder engagement
 - Access channels (city website, Facebook group, Quoddy Tides, boards, etc.)
- Coordinating City Council communications detail and cadence

Working timeline (draft)

- Q4
 - Apply for planning grants
 - Draft RFP – send when ready
 - Identify industry partner choice
 - Initiate Communications Plan & Stakeholder engagement
 - Receive planning grants and initiate focused spend
 - Initial implementation funding options explored
- 2023 Q1
 - Final costs identified to Council
 - Funding plan solidified
 - Council approves plan and authorizes funding and implementation
 - External funds secured
 - Industry partner contract in place
 - Implementation timeline finalized

Eastport City Council Reporting

- To what plans reports, critical data does the Eastport City Council want visibility?
- How often does the council want updates?
 - Grant application status
 - Commercial partner candidate discussions
 - Communications/Community Engagement
 - Finances
- Other council guidance

Questions?

